



Kentucky Literacy Link

A Publication of the Kentucky Department of Education



Special points of interest:

- Connecting to world languages
- Useful online resources for teachers
- Using your library media program to support KCAS
- Addressing your concerns about On-demand Writing

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The Importance of Text-Based Instruction

The mission of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is to help schools and districts prepare students for college and careers. Our students, however, often are not prepared for the amounts and types of reading they will be responsible for beyond high school. Our students need to read regularly and independently if they are to achieve college and career readiness (CCR.) The *Common Core State Standards* further elaborate on this point in Appendix A of the English/language arts (ELA) standards:

"One of the key requirements of the Common Core State Standards for Reading is that all students must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school. By the time they complete the

core, students must be able to read and comprehend independently and proficiently the kinds of complex texts commonly found in college and careers."

To summarize, while reading demands in college, workforce training programs and life in general have held steady or increased over the last half-century, K-12 texts have actually declined in sophistication, and relatively little attention has been paid to students' ability to read complex texts independently.

These conditions have left a serious gap between many high school seniors' reading ability and the reading requirements they will face after graduation. The most important implication of this study was that a focus only on "higher-order" or "critical" thinking was insufficient to ensure that students were ready for college and

careers: what students could read, in terms of complexity, was at least as important as what they could do with what they read.

In this issue, we offer strategies and suggestions for incorporating reading into instruction across the curriculum. While we touch on text complexity, the focus of this issue is on practical application and providing resources. (If you need further information on text complexity, consult the suggested reading and resources on the last page of this newsletter, including the May 2011 issue of the *Literacy Link* that focused on this topic.) We hope you take away something that you can use today.

On-Demand Writing Samples Posted

We receive calls and e-mails daily from teachers with questions about on-demand writing (ODW). With the release of the new samples (access [here](#)), there has been a surge in such communications. Please note that these samples are drafts until after field-test review in December. More importantly, remember that the best preparation for ODW is high-quality writing instruction. While you are eager to prepare your

students for this testing structure, we must all keep in mind that our ultimate goal is to prepare our students for college and careers.

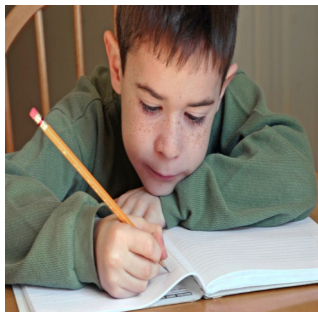
Our best suggestion for preparing your students is to make sure they have writing opportunities for writing aligned to the standards, utilize the deconstructed standards and respond to writing tasks based on each of the three modes of writing.

Students might be asked in any number of ways to respond, but the scoring focuses on their ability to write an opinion/argument, inform or explain and narrate.

In January, KDE will be releasing a document to assist with instruction on the modes of writing. In the interim, here are a few ideas.

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On-Demand Writing



*“Education is
not the filling of
a pail, but the
lighting of a
fire.”*

*-William Butler
Yeats*

A member of our KDE team took some time to create a few sample writing opportunities based on her knowledge of the standards. **These samples do not represent any official prompts for assessment.** Rather, they represent writing opportunities you might provide students in the classroom to help students master standards 1-3. Notice also that these prompts require instruction at various intervals for students to complete the prompt. By building their confidence as writers, they will be able to perform better in a testing situation such as on-demand writing.

Example 1: (grade 6+) Our local school board is considering allowing cell phones to be used in classrooms. Write an **argument** to be delivered at the school board meeting. Write for or against the use of cell phones in the classroom. Support your claim with clear reasons. (Make this scenario one that really affects students in your region — write about a real event rather than this fabricated example.)

Example 2: As part of our study of various cultures from around the world. Examine two photographs from the series “What the World Eats” and read

two entries of text about two families. Write to **inform** our class blog readers about what you learn as you compare and contrast what the two families eat.

Example 3: What makes a person a hero? Write a **narrative**, real or imagined, about a hero.

Example 4: Does global warming have a significant effect on global climate? After reading informational texts, write an essay that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the text(s).

In 6th grade, the writing standards shift from opinion to argumentation. Students need to develop skills in drawing information from text to support their ideas or claims. That’s a necessary piece of an argument. Students also may use some persuasive techniques to build their argument, but the focus is about using textual evidence to support rather than just emotional appeal, for instance.

Each year that students are assessed with the ODW assessment, the type of prompt (passage or situational) associ-

ated with a mode (narrative, informative, opinion/argument) will vary because all students need to be able to write all of the modes. Because of the design of a large-scale assessment, there will be a **yearly rotation of the blueprint** that will have no particular order but will assess students’ abilities to write all of the modes. No matter the mode assessed in a particular year, students should have the opportunity to write and support their answers with text. It just so happens that the blueprint for this year was released to indicate that 6th grade may have a passage-based prompt asking them to write to inform/explain and a stand-alone argument prompt.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have additional questions about this information.

Utilizing Non-Print Sources as Texts



You’ve heard that old saying, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Well, why not expose your students to thousands of words, no matter their reading ability? Imagine engaging all of your learners deeply in complex text. Utilizing pictures as text can encourage your students to be more analytical and can allow them to access information they might not otherwise understand.

Consider example 3 in the article above. In a photo essay entitled “What the World Eats,” photographer Peter Menzel compares the eating habits of 30 families in 24 countries. Author Faith D’Alusio writes accompanying text that could be used in a scaffolded manner to teach this content.

Choose 2-3 families to compare. As you have students

compare and contrast these cultures, teach them to “read” the pictures closely. Fold the pictures into four quadrants and have students consider the information in each quadrant before looking at the whole. What do they notice in each section? How does looking at the entire picture change that? What conclusions can they draw from their observations?

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Using Text-Based Instruction with English Learners

ESL, EL, ELL, LEP ... there are so many acronyms out there being used to refer to students who are learning English. What do these acronyms mean, and which ones should teachers use? ESL, or English as a Second Language, is often used in Kentucky schools and classrooms to refer to programs developed for students who are learning English as a second or next language. EL (English Learner) and ELL (English Language Learner) both refer to students who are learning English as well. LEP or Limited English Proficient is the term used in Infinite Campus to identify students who are English learners. And while EL or English Learner is currently the preferred phrase, the other acronyms — ESL, ELL and LEP — are still widely used when referring to students learning English.

Whether you are familiar with the various terms used to identify English learners or not, it is important to be aware that with over 15,000 K-12 English learners in our state, if you do not currently work with students who are English learners, you very well might sometime in the very near future. Text-based instruction is an excellent tool for building English learners' language proficiency. Kentucky's Core Academic Standards focus on developing students' facility with a variety of texts and for a variety of purposes. In order to adapt text-based instruction for English learners, teachers need to understand these students' language development needs. Acquiring a second language occurs in stages. As English learners move through these stages, they quickly acquire the language needed to interact and communicate in social settings — usually within a year

or two. However, acquiring academic language proficiency can take much longer — from four to seven years or more. While English learners have a rich variety of experiences with their own language and culture which they bring with them to the classroom, in order to develop their second language proficiency, English learners must be immersed in an environment in which they are hearing and using the English language in context.

Since 2006, Kentucky has been a member of a 27 state consortium, the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium. The mission of the WIDA consortium is to support academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through the English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which Kentucky has adopted.

(www.wida.us)

WIDA's English Language Development standards are broad in scope and focus on the development of academic success in all content areas. The five standards are:

1. English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
2. English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.
3. English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Mathematics.
4. English language learners communicate information,

ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Science.

5. English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

Recently, WIDA analyzed the Defining Features of Academic Language and divided academic language into three levels seen in the chart on the next page. This chart is a tool teachers of English learners can use as they plan text-based instruction in their classrooms. Although a typical text-based lesson would very naturally incorporate all three levels of academic language, an intentional focus on one level when planning lessons will provide English learners the additional scaffolding they need to build their academic language proficiency.

The Defining Features of Academic Language Chart (page 4) also provides a vehicle for understanding how to overlay Kentucky's Common Core Academic Standards onto the English Language Development Standards. For example:

R.CCR.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.L.K.1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in the text.

Reviewing the Kentucky's deconstructed standards at the kindergarten level, this standard asks that, with prompting and support students:

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***“Education is
the key to
unlock the
golden door of
freedom.”***

***-George
Washington
Carver***



The Defining Features of Academic Language in WIDA's Standards

The Defining Features of Academic Language operate within a sociocultural context for language use.

	Performance Criteria	Features	Examples
Discourse Level	Discourse Complexity <i>(Quantity and variety of oral and written text)</i>	Amount of speech/written text Structure of speech/written text Density of speech/written text Organization and cohesion of ideas Variety of sentence types	Voice Mood Cohesive forms (referential, repetition) Coherence (e.g., topic and comment and key words for written language; relevance, sequencing, and closing relevant to topic for oral language) Logical connectors Parallelism Organizational types (e.g., narration, exposition, description)
Sentence Level	Language Forms and Conventions <i>(Types, array, and use of language structures)</i>	Types and variety of grammatical structures Conventions, mechanics, and fluency Match of language forms to purpose/perspective	Tense Aspect (e.g., progressive, perfect tenses) Simple, compound, and complex sentences Word order Parallelism Denotation and connotation Formulaic expressions Interrogatives Prosodic features (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm of speech) Agreement (e.g., subject/verb)
Word/Phrase Level	Vocabulary Usage <i>(Specificity of word or phrase choice)</i>	General, specific, and technical language Multiple meanings of words and phrases Formulaic and idiomatic expressions Nuances and shades of meaning Collocations	Sound-symbol-spelling correspondence Word formations (e.g., affixes, compounding) Count/non-count distinctions Denotation and connotation Possession (e.g., possessives)

The sociocultural context for language use involves the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the...

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants' identities and social roles

English Learners

- Ask and answer questions.
- Identify key details in the text.

Using the WIDA Defining Features of Academic Language Chart, at the sentence level, the teacher might focus on providing English learners with a scaffold such as a sentence frame in order to teach them the grammatical structure used in asking and answering questions in English. At the discourse level, the teacher might focus on assisting the English learner by using a graphic organizer to help them structure their responses using sequencing. At the word/phrase level, the teacher might focus on

providing a vocabulary bank which identifies key words in the text. Of course, at each grade level the standards progress in complexity, but using the Defining Features of Academic Language Chart will help you to continually think about ways to provide support to your English learners as they acquire both social and academic English.

The Defining Features of Academic Language Chart is available on the WIDA website www.wida.us. Using a tool such as this one will help scaffold your understanding of ways to assist English learners to achieve the goal of college and career readiness for all. Please

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feel free to contact the Title III consultants at any time with questions:

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Contributed by Jayne Kraemer, Ph.D.

Title III Consultant,
English Learners and
Immigrant Students



Project Eurolib for Early Language Learning

The European Children's Travelling Language Library <http://www.eulib.eu/> is a European Union-funded education project. It is targeted at children who have recently started to learn a foreign language to:

- ⇒ expose them to the rich heritage of European languages and cultures
- ⇒ motivate them to learn languages
- ⇒ build a love of reading as the best form of autonomous lifelong learning
- ⇒ reinforce emerging literacy

Travelling libraries of the most beautifully illustrated children's books in six European languages (English, Spanish, Turkish, Italian, Czech and Finnish) travel from school to school across Europe. Each school keeps the library for a period and has to carry out a number

of educational and collaborative activities before, during, and after the visit of the library.

Using the Libraries

The Eurolib libraries and the pedagogic resources are now complete and ready for schools across Europe to use. You can download the documents about using the libraries at http://www.eulib.eu/teacher_manual.html.

- Contributed by Jacqueline Bott Van Houten, Ph.D. Jacque is a World Languages and International Education Consultant for KDE.

Studies show that early language learning can provide such benefits as higher test scores, more advanced reading skills and a broader worldview.



How Can Your School's Library Media Program Support KCAS?

According to the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects*, library skills such as research and media evaluation are prevalent throughout the standards. The standards document states, "The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today's curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understandings are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section." (p. 4) Therefore, school library media specialists are vital partners in helping students achieve the skills necessary for college and career success.

Text Supports

Standards related to "gathering, assessing, and applying information from print and digital sources" are found in the Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening strands of the standards document, as well as in the strands for Reading and Writing for History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects. (p. 10) Students and teachers can find a variety of print and digital sources for this work in the school library. Library media specialists are specifically trained to assist patrons in accessing the most appropriate resources for particular tasks, both informational and recreational. Library media specialists know the collection of print and digital texts available to the student body and faculty and can quickly direct patrons to the materials needed to support the work of implementing the Standards. Librarians across the state have been analyzing their school libraries' collections in order to provide the best possible text

support for teachers and students. They use the range of text types provided in the standards document, as well as the lists of exemplar texts to inform decisions about purchases. Although the text exemplars are not required reading lists, librarians certainly work to make sure at least some of the representative titles are available to give guidance to teachers for selection of other appropriate items that match the text complexity of the examples provided.

Informational Reading

Information access is at the core of any school library media program. Library media specialists have knowledge and experience in the acquisition of information resources to support the curriculum and in teaching patrons the most effective ways to find those resources. As teachers delve into new categories of literary non-fiction to help students meet new standards, school libraries can provide texts to support this work in the classroom. Library media specialists in Kentucky schools can provide instruction on the use of the Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL) for access to approximately 30 digital databases of scholarly and popular journals, local/state/national newspapers, online encyclopedias, news/radio program transcripts and primary sources for K-12 students, many of which are searchable by Lexile reading levels in order to accommodate different reading abilities. This virtual environment is accessible for students at school or at home (in subscribing districts), as well as in most public libraries across the state, and last year logged 2.8 million searches by K-12 students from

participating districts. Content offered in KYVL is screened for age-appropriateness, unlike content that may be found through Google, Wikipedia or other Internet sources. Kimberly Shearer, an English teacher at Boone County High School and the 2012 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, says her English III students regularly use the virtual library in their argumentative writing. "There is no guesswork – my students know whatever information they encounter on KYVL is current and reliable. Students also like that it is one-stop shopping. With that one website, they have access to full text resources and to citation help."

"The ultimate goal is for our students to be independent learners and for them to conduct their own interest-driven inquiries, and KYVL helps foster those 21st century skills because it is so user-friendly."

Free training is provided by KYVL librarians for Kentucky educators, and specific online tutorials are available on the KYVL website. Kentuckians can access KYVL at www.kyvl.org. Passwords for student and teacher access at home are available from school librarians. Library media standards and ELA standards *examples* related to informational text:

- **Library Media Standard 1.1.5:** Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.
- **W.7.8:** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and

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"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all."

- Jackie Kennedy

Library Media Program

conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- **Library Media Standard I.1.6:** Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.
- **RI.K.9:** With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, or procedures).

Recreational Reading

Recreational reading is part of the new English/language arts standards, as well as part of Kentucky's library media standards (*Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* - click [here](#)). Both sets of standards promote exposure for students to a wide variety of reading material (fiction and nonfiction) at increasingly complex reading levels. The Lexile Framework® for Reading provides guidance for matching texts to readers and was adopted by the Kentucky Department of Education last year. Library media specialists are uniquely qualified to pair readers with books and use many tools to assist in this process, including Lexile reading and text levels, not relying on any one specific guide. Reader characteristics such as interest, motivation, background knowledge, and reading context/purpose are all factors librarians consider when matching books to readers, as well as the age-appropriateness of a particular text (MetaMetrics, 2011). With this in mind, schools would be remiss in advising the librarian to reorganize the school library according to Lexile measures

since that is only one tool of many that should be considered when choosing texts to support learning.

KYVL's NovelList (a fiction reader's advisory) is searchable by Lexile levels and provides book discussion guides, grab and go booklists, picture book extenders, and author read-alouds, as well as many other teaching tools. The NovelList "search by plot description" capability can be especially helpful in providing fiction texts to meet many English language arts standards.

Examples of standards that support the pursuit of personal reading:

- **Library Media Standard 4.1.4:** Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.
- **RL.1.5:** Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
- **Library Media Standard 4.4.6:** Evaluate own ability to select resources that are engaging and appropriate for personal interests and needs.
- **RL.7.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

More than Text Support

Library media specialists are certainly more than providers of text supports and digital resources. They are certified teachers ready to collaborate with other teachers to help students tackle inquiry research projects required in the new

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English/language arts standards. School libraries operating on a flexible library schedule with a full-time, certified library media specialist provide the best environment for this important collaboration to take place (Kentucky's "School Library Media Program Rubric," pp. 4-5). School-based decision making councils can be proactive in establishing school schedules to best accommodate point-of-need access to both the library media center resources and to the library media specialist to support student achievement.

For more information about how to support an effective school library program in your school, access *Beyond Proficiency @your library*® from the Kentucky Department of Education's website, or contact KDE library media/textbooks consultant Kathy Mansfield at kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov.

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Web Resources

Kentucky Virtual Library -

<http://www.kyvl.org/>

Online catalogs and databases, online tutorial and help with internet-based research, a virtual reference desk, and access to Kentuckiana's digitized collections.

Thinkfinity.org - <http://www.thinkfinity.org/>

Thousands of free lesson plans in math, social studies, art, language arts, music, physical education, reading, writing, geography and science.

BoysRead -

www.boysread.org

An organization of parents, educators, librarians, mentors, authors and booksellers whose mission is to transform boys into lifelong readers.

GuysRead -

www.guysread.com

A site designed to get boys reading. Offers a list of books recommended by the webmaster, children's author Jon Scieszka, and others suggested by visitors to the website.

Read Works -

www.readworks.org

All ReadWorks lessons are aligned to Common Core State Standards

Teen Ink - www.teenink.com

Teen Ink, a national teen magazine, book series and website devoted entirely to teenage writing, art, photos and forums.

ReadWriteThink -

www.readwritethink.org

Providing educators and students access to the highest quality practices and resources in reading and language arts instruction.

ICDL - International Children's Digital Library -

www.childrenslibrary.org

An online collection representing outstanding historical and contemporary children's books from around the world.

SAS Curriculum Pathways

- <http://www.sascurriculumpathways.com/portal/>

SAS delivers online curriculum resources with a proven impact on increasing student learning and teacher effectiveness – at no cost to U.S. middle and high schools.

Teacher's Domain -

www.teachersdomain.org

A free digital media service for educational use from public broadcasting and its partners. You'll find thousands of media resources and tools.

Teenreads -

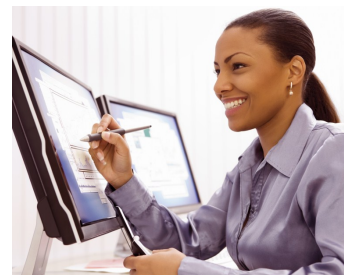
www.teenreads.com

A site dedicated to book lovers providing a forum to discover and share commentary about the books and authors they enjoy.

Kidsreads -

www.kidsreads.com

Reading lists, series books, classic titles and the newest titles all are part of Kidsreads.com, along with trivia games, contests, author interviews and author profiles for younger children.



***“Education is
all a matter of
building
bridges.”***

-Ralph Ellison

Twitter Town Hall

The Kentucky Department of Education invites teachers, administrators, district staff, parents and other education stakeholders to submit questions for Commissioner Terry Holliday's second Twitter Town Hall **Thursday, Jan. 19 from 4-5 p.m. ET.** The Twitter Town

Hall topics will be the 2012 General Assembly and KDE's legislative agenda. Questions can be tweeted both before Jan. 19 and during the live event from 4-5 p.m. ET. Use the hash tag **#AskDocH** to send questions.

If you don't have a Twitter

account and would like to sign up for one, visit www.twitter.com. It's a free service and also offers apps for smartphones if you'd rather follow along off-PC/MAC.

The Twitter Town Hall also will be webcast live. If you

would like to follow the Twitter Town Hall via live webcast, click [here](#). To listen and/or watch, you must have Windows Media Player installed on your workstation. Once Windows Media Player is installed, click on the appropriate link to hear audio only or view the video with audio.

Using Non-Print Sources

(continued from p. 2)

This approach can be used anytime you introduce pictures as texts. Consider using the quadrant idea to analyze pictures as primary sources in social studies or to compare a movie still to a description

within a novel in English class. In either situation, the exercise can lead to a writing opportunity as discussed in the on-demand writing article (example 3) on page 2.

Not sure where to find photos? Try photobucket.com, flickr.com or even a Google image search.



Help

Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail

kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov

to submit. Your submissions may be included in the *Literacy Link* to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past
Literacy Links on KDE's
website:
[Click Here](#)



If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Renee Boss- Academic Core Branch Manager - renee.boss@education.ky.gov
- Cindy Parker - Literacy Coordinator - cindy.parker@education.ky.gov
- Kathy Mansfield- Library Consultant - kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov
- MK Hardaway- Literacy Consultant - kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov
- Jackie Rogers- Literacy Consultant - jackie.rogers@education.ky.gov
- Synthia Shelby- Literacy Consultant - synthia.shelby@education.ky.gov

Additional Reading and Other Resources

- ♦ *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K-6* by Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli
- ♦ *Texts and Lessons for Content-Area Reading* by Harvey "Smokey" Daniels and Nancy Steineke
- ♦ KDE released a webinar on text complexity that may be of assistance as you determine what texts are appropriate for your students. Access that webinar [here](#). (Scroll down the menu on right side of page to May 16, 2011 post.)
- ♦ Check out the [May 2011 Literacy Link](#) on text complexity.
- ♦ [Appendix A](#) of the Common Core ELA standards discusses text complexity as well.
- ♦ "What the World Eats" <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5005952>

